82. 1955.

The Affection of CHRIST to HIS young Disciples;

OR,

Fervent and early Piety recommended and encouraged.

A

SERMON,

OCCASIONED BY THE MUCH LAMENTED DEATH OF

THOMAS BOWDEN,

Who departed this Life March 15th, 1795,

AGED TEN YEARS;

PREACHED AT

LOWER-TOOTING, in SURRY,

MARCH 22d, 1795.

BY JAMES BOWDEN.

FATHER, I WILL THAT THEY ALSO WHOM THOU HAST GIVEN ME, BE WITH ME WHERE I AM, THAT THEY MAY BEHOLD MY GLORY. John xvii. 24.

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This plain Diſcourſe would have appeared before the public ſooner, could the Author have readily yielded to the ſolicitations of his Friends. The favourable reception however which his former Sermon, on a like mournful occaſion, met with—and the uſefulneſs he has reaſon to conclude it has been attended with, are arguments which he cannot but feel the force of.

This *therefore he offers to the Friends of Piety, with his earneſt prayer, that the ſame, or a more abundant bleſſing of the great* HEAD OF THE CHURCH *may attend it:—and that every humble and early inquirer after* CHRIST *and Salvation, into whoſe hands it ſhall fall, may find it* a word in ſeaſon.

TOOTING, May 4, 1795.

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TOCKING, May 4, 1791.

A SERMON, &c.

PROV. 8. ch. 17. v.

I love them that love ME, *and thoſe that ſeek* ME *early ſhall find* ME.

I do but expreſs a thought which obſervation has almoſt univerſally ſuggeſted, when I remark—"What a dying *world*, and what a dying *year* is the preſent!" How many have been dropping into eternity around us! How frequently has the inſatiable grave been opening its mouth to receive the duſt and ruins of mortality!—no age, no deſcription of mankind has been exempted:—the rich and the poor, the young and the old, the righteous and the wicked have been crowding to that "houſe appointed for all the living."

There is a ſolemnity, there is an intereſting importance in the fact thus conſidered. But O! it carries with it a ſpecial ſolemnity and importance, when we trace the immortal ſpirit, and think of the change it experiences

at death,—the judgment it receives,—and the vaſt, the eternal ſtate into which it enters.

While the bills of mortality, the regiſters of the dead, have increaſed beyond the example of *many, many years*, how delightful to think what unuſual acceſſions have been made to heaven's bliſsful ſociety!—how awful to purſue in our imagination the multitudes, who, charity itſelf is conſtrained to fear, have been "*driven away in their wickedneſs*," and "*have their portion with unbelievers!*"

My brethren, a ſeaſon ſo remarkably diſtinguiſhed by the triumphs of death, ſhould be a thoughtful ſeaſon. It becomes us all to be ſerious. I now wiſh to "*exhort the young to be ſober-minded*,"—to apply with ſerioufneſs to the great concerns of another world,—to "*ſearch the ſcriptures*" with an attentive prayerful ſpirit,—to ſearch their own hearts with earneſtneſs and fidelity,—to "*give diligent heed to the things they hear*," and leave no ordinance of heaven neglected, whence they are encouraged to expect advantage, in the great concerns of their ſouls and eternity. O! that we all "*were wiſe, that* we all *underſtood theſe things*, and with habitual and becoming ſerioufneſs, *conſidered our latter end!*"

Providence

Providence calls upon me this day to addreſs you as a *mourner*; "*for the hand of* GOD again *hath touched me.*" It would ill become me, however, in the language of complaint, to ſay, "HE *hath broken me with breach upon breach!*"—My obligations and incentives to gratitude, love, and praiſe, are too great to be overlooked. I can truly ſay I know of no one more deeply indebted to the grace and bounty of heaven. And "*ſhall I receive* "*good at the hand of the* LORD, *and ſhall I not* "*receive evil!*"—Indeed I *have* ſeen enough in this renewed diſpenſation; I *can* ſee enough in the words I have now read to ſilence complaint, and afford the moſt ſolid ground for grateful joy. It is not "*an enemy hath done this;*"—No, it is a wiſe, compaſſionate, faithful *friend.* The more I contemplate HIS excellency, the love of HIS heart, and the conduct of HIS providence, the more reaſon I find to ſay with the pious Shunammite, "*It* "*is well!*"[a] or with the devout Pſalmiſt, "*I* "*know, O* LORD, *that* THY *judgments are* "*right; and that* THOU *in faithfulneſs haſt* "*afflicted me!*"[a]

Much there is in the declaration and pro-

[a] 2 Kings iv. 26. [a] Pſalm 119. 75.

miſe I have read to reconcile the followers of JESUS to afflictive diſpenſations.

My fellow mourners, is CHRIST "*precious to you*" and to me, "*as* HE *is to them that believe?*" then all is *well* that HE does; nothing but *good* can proceed from HIS hands, or happen to us under HIS eye. If our enjoyment of creature comforts be interrupted, and "*the deſire of* our *eyes*," and the delight of our ſouls be "*taken away by a ſtroke*;" there is enough in the declaration of a SAVIOUR's love to check immoderate grief, and heal the bleeding heart; for, "*whom the* "*LORD loveth* HE *chaſteneth, and ſcourgeth* "*every ſon whom* HE *receiveth.*" [b]

"Peace every angry paſſion then!
"Let each rebellious ſigh
"Be ſilent at HIS ſov'reign will,
"And ev'ry murmur die!

"*The* LORD *gave, and the* LORD *hath* "*taken away; bleſſed be the name of the* "LORD!"

What a heart reviving apprehenſion does this give us of the ſtate of thoſe of our friends departed, who were here the friends of CHRIST! and how much is there herein to reconcile us to the loſs we ſuſtain.

[b] Heb. xii. 6.

It

It is my joy to think that the dear child, whoſe death we mourn, from his infant days appeared to "*chooſe the way of* GOD'S *ſta-*
"*tutes.*" The duties of religion were no burdenſome taſk to him; he applied himſelf to them with manifeſt and habitual pleaſure. It pleaſed GOD that he ſhould be a child of affliction, and it was evidently "*good for him that he bore the yoke in his youth.*" It gave us pleaſure and ſurpriſe to obſerve the ſettled peace and ſerenity of his mind under long continued ſuffering. To be ſeparated from his companions and diverſions, did not appear to give him any uneaſineſs. "*In patience he poſſeſſed his ſoul,*" amidſt reſtleſs nights and increaſed ſuffering. No diſpoſition to murmur or complain, ever appeared. He could prefer his affliction, and his crutches, with the grace of GOD, to health and eaſe, and proſperity without it. His heart was ſet on the enjoyment of the ordinances of divine worſhip; and he often ſhewed, how much pains he was willing to take to obtain that deſire. And when under the word, his attention was remarkably fixed; his heart appeared devout. Yet ſometimes he would expreſs his grief, that his attention had

had been, by ſome means or other, interrupted; and that he could remember no more. Scarce any ſuffering could force a tear from his eye, ſo ſoon as an occurrence relating to his affliction or the weather, which obliged him to deny himſelf the pleaſure of going up to the houſe of GOD. The Pſalmiſt's plea was manifeſtly applicable to him (nor has it I truſt been urged in vain!) "LORD, *I have loved the habitation of* THY "*houſe, and the place where* THINE *honour* "*dwelleth: gather not my ſoul with ſinners!*"[c] The fervour which he diſcovered in prayer, in retired prayer, and in family prayer, afforded no little proof that he "*loved* "*Chriſt*" and "*ſought* HIM *early.*"

Indeed he appeared to be peculiarly entertained and gratified, in reading or repeating, in hearing from the pulpit, or in private converſation, any thing that was of the moſt ſpiritual and heavenly nature.

Many of Dr. Watt's hymns afforded him great delight. *That* he often repeated and ſung with manifeſt pleaſure which begins thus:

"Death cannot make our ſouls afraid,
"If GOD be with us there."——Hymn 45, II Book

[c] Pſalm xxvi. 8, 9.

And

And there was ſomething remarkably ſignificant in the earneſtneſs and delight with which he often ſung hymn 75 II Book.

" From THEE my GOD my joys ſhall riſe,
" And run eternal rounds," &c.

In the laſt ſtage of his illneſs, delirium from fever, prevented all converſe: and we were then ſhewn, what reaſon we had to be thankful, for thoſe evidences which had before appeared, of a " *heart directed into the* " *love of* GOD."

Under theſe circumſtances, we felt a very earneſt deſire for the return of reaſon, eſpecially with a view to ſome further and ſpecial token of the loving-kindneſs of GOD towards him. The day before his death, having been very particularly engaged in prayer, for ſome ſignal manifeſtation of mercy in this reſpect; on my entrance into his room preſently after, I was not a little ſtruck at finding him *ſinging*, and continuing thus employed for ſome time. To others there might appear nothing in this circumſtance worthy of obſervation! However I was led to remark it the more, when I found that his lateſt breath was thus employed; as if his departing ſpirit, full of the joy into which it was entering, tuned the laſt movements of animal nature, to the ſongs itſelf was beginning!

And

And now, my fellow-mourners, what ſhall we ſay?—Shall we repine?—Shall we reply? O, No!—JESUS has ſaid enough to ſuppreſs every complaining thought.—"*I love them* "*that love* ME, *and thoſe that ſeek* ME *early* "*ſhall find* ME."

Where ſhould the lambs of the flock be but in their SHEPHERD's arms? HE bought them with his blood; HE renewed them by HIS ſpirit, and formed them for HIMSELF; and is HE unkind, when HE claims them for HIS own? When HE replies to the importunity of prayer, "*Suffer little children, and forbid* "*them not to come unto* ME: *for of ſuch is the* "*kingdom of heaven.*"[d] Shall we not participate the joy which HE feels, while "HE ſees "*of the travail of* HIS *ſoul?*" O how HE *rejoiceth over them with joy!* how HE *reſteth in* HIS *love!* and *rejoiceth over them with ſinging!*

——Oh, glorious change! *we* live in a changing world; infirmities attend us, temptations befet us, dangers threaten us, troubles overtake us. Even princes find their thrones inſecure; and the kingdoms of this world are liable to be ſhaken and demoliſhed. But there

[d] Matt. xix. 14.

is

is "*a city that hath foundations*:"—there is a region where peace and joy are never interrupted. "*The inhabitants ſhall not ſay,* "We are *ſick.*"[e] "*They ſhall hunger no* "*more, neither thirſt any more, neither ſhall* "*the ſun light on them, nor any heat. For* "*the* LAMB *which is in the midſt of the* "*throne, ſhall feed them, and ſhall lead them* "*to fountains of living water: and* GOD *ſhall* "*wipe away all tears from their eyes.*"[f]—— O! happy they who have gained that ſeat of bleſſedneſs,—who are *entered into the joy of their* LORD! My brethren, can you help feeling a deſire,—ſhall I ſay, can you help feeling an ambition to be joined to the company of thoſe, who having "*believed* "*and embraced the promiſes*, practically *con-* "*feſs themſelves pilgrims and ſtrangers on the* "*earth*;[g] and *deſire a better country, that is,* "*an heavenly*;"[h] O! glorious day, when that prayer of the ſinner's advocate ſhall be fully anſwered, "*FATHER, I will that they alſo,* "*whom* THOU *haſt given* ME, *may be with* ME "*where I am, to behold* MY *glory.*"[i]

I now wiſh to give thoſe words a *voice*, which have been my relief and my joy: and

[e] Iſaiah xxxiii. 24. [f] Rev. vii. 16. 17. [g] Heb. xi. 13. [h] ib. v. 10. [i] 1 John xvii 24.

faithfully

faithfully to echo the ſweet accents, which a kind REDEEMER hath ſpoken; that all who hear me may learn how gracious HE is! "*how excellent* HIS *loving kindneſs!*" and may come, and "*put their truſt under the* "*ſhadow of* HIS *wings.*"

HIS words are, (O! that they may find acceſs to *every* heart! that the *young* eſpecially, with obedient and thankful minds, may receive them!) "*I love them that love* ME, *and thoſe* "*that ſeek me early, ſhall find me!*"

There can, I think, be no impropriety in applying what this chapter records, as ſpoken by *wiſdom*, to the bleſſed REDEEMER, WHO is "*the light of the world,*" [k]—and in "*WHOM* "*are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and* "*knowledge.*" [l]

It is the LORD JESUS then who ſpeaks,—it is the beſt *friend* of mankind,—it is "the "*only begotten of the Father, full of grace* "*and truth*:"—O! that every one of us who hear theſe HIS gracious words may ever have reaſon to remember this day with pleaſure, and to ſay with the wondering diſciples, "*Did* "*not our heart burn within us, while* HE "*talked with us by the way, and while* HE "*opened to us the ſcriptures?*" [m]

[k] John viii. 12. [l] Col. ii. 3. [m] Luke xxiv. 32.

FIRST.

FIRST.—Let me call your attention to the deſcription here given us of a truly religious temper. Genuine Chriſtianity implies "*love* "*to* CHRIST," and "*ſeeking* CHRIST."

I.—LOVE TO CHRIST.

Love to the LORD JESUS CHRIST, is that eſpecially which diſtinguiſhes a pardoned and renewed ſinner, an heir of GOD, from a "*ſervant of ſin*," and a "*child of wrath*." Love to CHRIST is a diſpoſition and exerciſe of the mind, which reaſon and gratitude, which duty and intereſt unitedly and powerfully enjoin:—O! that I could ſo exhibit this precious REDEEMER, to your view, in the glory of HIS perſon, and the wonders of HIS grace, that every eye might be fixed, with wonder and joy upon HIM, and every heart glow with love unto HIM! "Come, HOLY "SPIRIT, and now reveal thy promiſed "influence—*glorify* CHRIST,—*taking of the* "*things of* CHRIST, *and ſhewing them unto* "*us!*" [n]

O! ſirs, there is enough in CHRIST to endear HIM to every ſoul: "*yea*, HE *is alto-* "*gether lovely*."

[n] John xvi. 14, 15.

"HIS

"HIS worth did all the nations know;
"Sure the whole earth would love HIM too!"

There is an excellency and glory in HIS *perſon*, which ſurpaſſes the extent of language, and even of thought; for HE is "*the bright-*
"*neſs of his* HIS *FATHER's glory, and the*
"*expreſs image of* HIS *perſon.*"[o]

Can you behold HIM as an inhabitant of our world; can you trace the expreſſions of HIS unexampled benevolence towards the people amongſt whom HE ſojourned; and ſee how "*in all their afflictions* HE *was*
"*afflicted;*" how "HE *bore their griefs*
"*and carried their ſorrows;*"—how HE liſtened to their complaints, and cauſed their habitations to reſound with the ſongs of ſalvation;—how patiently "HE *endured the contradiction of ſinners againſt* HIMSELF," grieving for the hardneſs of their hearts, and weeping over thoſe who grieved HIS SPIRIT, and hated their own ſouls—can you trace the expreſſions of character ſo amiable and ſo uſeful, and not confeſs that, HE is "*fairer than the children of men?*"[p]

My brethren, the LORD JESUS comes to-day, to ſolicit your deareſt affection, and

[o] Heb. i. 3. [p] Pſalm xlv. 2.

your

your entire confidence. "My *ſon*," HE ſays, "*give* ME *thy heart.*" HE comes with a recommendation that claims your regard—the eternal JEHOVAH with infinite complacency, delighteth in HIM, and to recommend HIM to your affection and confidence, proclaims from Heaven, "*This is* MY BELOVED "*SON, in whom I am well pleaſed.*" *Hear ye* HIM.[q] O! may every heart bid HIM welcome, and all its powers exult, "*Thanks be* "*to* GOD *for* HIS *unſpeakable* GIFT."[r]

The glorious *angels* who are far more capable of eſtimating true worth than ourſelves, bring to our world the glad tidings of HIS birth, and in ſeraphic ſongs participate in our joys. O! the affectionate zeal with which they miniſtered to HIM in HIS temptations, in HIS bloody conflict, in HIS reſurrection and HIS aſcenſion to THIS kingdom of glory. O! ſirs, HE was, HE is dear to *angels*, and is there not enough in this to ſatisfy you that HE well deſerves *your* love?

But there are obligations more powerful, more ſweetly conſtraining to engage *your* love: HE *loved* angels, but HE *died* for you! When our caſe was deplorable and deſperate,

[q] 2 Pet. i, 17. Mark ix. vii. [r] 2 Cor. ix 15.

 helpleſs

helpleſs and hopeleſs—when juſtice appeared to vindicate with unrelaxing ſeverity, the honours of the broken law, and HE knew that the price of pardon muſt be HIS *blood*, HE ſaid, "*I delight to do* THY *will, O* GOD!"

With pitying eyes the PRINCE of PEACE
Beheld our helpleſs grief,
HE ſaw, and O! amazing love,
HE ran to our relief.

"*Ye know the grace of our* LORD JESUS "CHRIST, *that though* HE *was rich, yet for* "*your ſakes* HE *became poor, that ye through* "HIS *poverty might be made rich.*"[t] "HE "*gave* HIMSELF *for us an offering and a* "*ſacrifice to* GOD, *for a ſweet-ſmelling ſa-* "*vour.*"[u] HE *hath made* HIM *to be ſin for* "*us,* WHO *knew no ſin, that we might be* "*made the righteouſneſs of* GOD *in* HIM."[w] And is there a heart among us unmoved by ſuch unexampled compaſſions? unaffected to ſuch a friend as this? Can you contemplate HIS laſt ſuffering—HIS agonies on that night in which HE was betrayed, and the more diſmal darkneſs and horror of that day in which HE was crucified, and not feel the impreſſion of

[t] 2 Cor. viii, 9 [u] Eph. v, 2 [w] 2 Cor. v. 21.

HIS

HIS love? Is there here *one* hardened heart that the dying love of CHRIST cannot move?

"Alas, alas!" (one and another I ſuſpect is ſaying) "how often and how long has this "been my caſe! How many times have I "heard the love of a dying SAVIOUR repre- "ſented, without one melting affection? I "have ſtill gone on in my treſpaſſes, piercing "with an unrelenting heart, the SON OF "GOD afreſh, and grieving HIS ſpirit, WHOSE "love was ſtronger than death. Bleſſed JESUS "ſubdue my hard heart; teach me to look "on THEE WHOM I have pierced, and mourn. "O teach me to love THEE; and never let "ſin, that enemy of my ſoul and my SAVI- "OUR, be allowed a place in my breaſt."

And is this the language of your heart? Then be not diſcouraged: "*Bleſſed are they* "*who mourn, for they ſhall be comforted:*"[x] for "*Thus ſaith the* HIGH AND LOFTY ONE "*WHO inhabiteth eternity,* WHOSE *name is* "HOLY, *I dwell in the high and holy place,* "*with him alſo who is of a contrite and humble* "*ſpirit, to revive the ſpirit of the humble, and* "*to revive the heart of the contrite ones.*"[y]

[x] Matt v. 4. [y] Iſaiah lvii. xv

Perhaps the SPIRIT of the LORD JESUS CHRIST is now putting the important queſtion to the heart of many among us, "*loveſt* "*thou me?*" I truſt there are many preſent who, without heſitation, yet with the moſt admiring and humbling ſenſe of their obligations to divine grace, can reply, "*LORD,* "*THOU knoweſt all things, thou knoweſt that* "*I love* THEE:"[z] "*Yea, doubtleſs, and I* "*count all things but loſs for the excellency of* "*the knowledge of* CHRIST JESUS MY LORD:" for "*being juſtified by faith, we have peace* "*with* GOD, *through our* LORD JESUS CHRIST, "*by* WHOM *alſo we have acceſs by faith unto* "*this grace wherein we ſtand, and rejoice in* "*hope of the glory of* GOD."[a]

"BLESSED JESUS, permit a ſinner ran- "ſomed by THY blood to ſay, I love THEE! "I love THY *ſervice*; and in the keeping of "THY commandments I find a great reward. "I love THY *people*, becauſe they love my "LORD and bear HIS image. I love THINE "*ordinances*, becauſe therein I ſee THY "glory, and hear THY voice. I eſteem "THY favour as life: I reſt on THINE

[z] John xxi. 17. [a] Phil. vii. 8. Rom. v. 1, 2.

"atoning

" atoning death, and THY powerful inter-
" ceſſion; on THY friendſhip, and on THY
" precious promiſes, as the ſure foundation
" of my hope, and the everlaſting ſpring of
" my joys.—O that I could feel the more
" powerful conſtraints of THY love, and
" ſerve THEE with a warmer zeal. I de-
" light to think of heaven, becauſe there
" I ſhall ſee HIM in HIS unveiled glories,
" *WHOM my ſoul loveth*, and ſhall love HIM
" more, ſhall love HIM for ever."

But all *true Chriſtians* cannot ſpeak of their love to CHRIST with ſo much confidence. " O! that I were ſatisfied," (one and another is ſaying) " that my heart is " directed *into* HIS love! I hope I can ſay, " there is nothing I deſire ſo earneſtly, as to " love CHRIST, and to know that I am " loved of HIM. I hope I can ſay, I love the " company of thoſe who love HIM, and who " bear HIS image, and whoſe converſation " favours of HIS Spirit. But, alas! I have ſo " much iniquity in my heart, and can grieve " ſo little on account of it—my ſoul cleaveth " ſo much to the duſt; and the things of " time occupy ſo much of my thoughts, " and ſo much of my affection—I feel ſo

little

" little emotion of heart towards my SAVIOUR
" and ſo coldly ſeek HIM in HIS ordinances,
" that I often fear I want the genuine
" principle of love to CHRIST. Yet O!
" Bleſſed REDEEMER, I cannot relinquiſh
" my feeble hope, my ſoul cannot ſeek an-
" other reſt. *LORD to whom ſhould I go?*
" THOU *haſt the words of eternal life.* My
" heart trembles at the thought of being
" ſeparated from THEE, and having no part
" in THY precious ſalvation. All the trea-
" ſures of the world are, in my eſteem,
" lighter than vanity, when put in competi-
" tion with THEE. I could ſpurn at the
" offer of the whole of them, and ſay " *None*
" *but Chriſt! None but Chriſt!*" I ſee no
" other *refuge*, no other *mark*, where I can
" be ſecure from the wrath to come. *Though*
" *HE ſlay me, I* muſt *truſt in HIM.* And do
" I preſume too far, when I *come to JESUS,*
" *the MEDIATOR of the new covenant, and*
" *to the blood of ſprinkling, that ſpeaketh*
" *better things than the blood of Abel?*
" LORD, I *cannot* forſake *THY courts*, where
" THY beauty is ſeen; I *would* not relinquiſh
" THY *croſs*, and ſhrink from afflictions and
" ſufferings for THY ſake. Though darkneſs

" and

" and trembling attend my ſteps, my heart " is fixed not to *leave* THEE, *or to return* " *from following after* THEE: " *for whither* " THOU *goeſt, I will go; and where* THOU " *lodgeſt, I will lodge;* THY *people ſhall be my* " *people, and* THY GOD, *my* GOD."[b]

Well, be of good comfort—that bleſſed SPIRIT WHO has given you to ſee the glory of CHRIST, and awakened earneſt deſires in your ſoul towards HIM, will not leave you till he has ſilenced your doubts, and " *filled* " *you with all joy and peace in believing.*"

II. Another act and exerciſe of true religion, is SEEKING CHRIST: " *I love them* " *that love* ME, *and thoſe who ſeek* ME *early* " *ſhall find* ME."

This is a natural conſequent of the former, as both are of the revelation of the excellency and glory of CHRIST to the ſoul by the HOLY SPIRIT.

Mankind will ever make light of CHRIST, and of the things of CHRIST, till the SPIRIT OF GOD comes, WHOSE office it is, to " *con-* " *vince of ſin.*"

Miniſters may proclaim the amazing love of CHRIST; the compaſſion of HIS heart

[b] Ruth i. xvi

the

the wonders of HIS croſs; the unſearchable riches of HIS grace: but it is to little purpoſe while men "*have the underſtanding darkened*;" while they "*mind earthly things*;" while ſin ſits enthroned in the heart, and every member, every power, is ſubſervient to its command, and "*obeys it in the luſts thereof.*" Arguments the moſt weighty, the moſt perſuaſive, the moſt ſolemn, produce no *ſaving* effect. The moſt alarming events in providence, as well as the moſt melting diſcourſes, leave no abiding impreſſion.

So it would ever have been with Paul, had it not "*pleaſed* GOD, *WHO ſeparated* him "*from* his *mother's womb, to call* him *by* "*HIS grace, and reveal HIS SON in* him."[b]

When the power of God is thus revealed in the heart of a ſinner, he finds the vanity of his former confidences; he finds he is "eſtranged from GOD," and "ready to "periſh;" he ſees he greatly needs a SAVIOUR; he ſees the importance of ſalvation. With joy he liſtens to that heavenly counſel, "*Turn ye to the STRONG HOLD, ye priſoners of "hope.*"[c] He hears with joy the miniſters of

[b] Gal. i. 15 [c] Zech. ix. 12

the

the goſpel expatiate on the grace of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and HIS ability to ſave—his very heart preſſes forward in ſtrong deſire, while they repeat HIS OWN gracious call, "*Come unto* ME *all ye that labour and are heavy* "*laden, and I will give you reſt.*" Now he ſeeks an intereſt in CHRIST—he ſeeks communion with CHRIST, and conformity to CHRIST. With this ſolicitude he reads *the ſcriptures*,

"That ſacred field where hidden lies
"The pearl of price unknown."

This benefit he would derive from the *communion of ſaints*. To them the language of his heart is, "*Sirs, I would ſee* JESUS." "*Saw ye* HIM WHOM *my ſoul loveth?*" With theſe enquiries he frequents *ordinances*; for therein the KING OF SAINTS is wont to ſatisfy the deſires of the longing ſoul, and to give him to ſee HIS glory. This is the diſpoſition of his heart under the *diſpenſations of providence* that attend him, "O, to "be brought nearer to CHRIST, and to know "mine intereſt in HIS precious ſalvation." This is the burden of his *prayer* from day to day; nor will he ever ceaſe to ſeek the LORD

JESUS

JESUS CHRIST, till he ſhall be immediately "*with* HIM *where* HE *is to behold* HIS *glory.*"

But what is it to ſeek the LORD JESUS CHRIST early?

I anſwer firſt, with earneſtneſs and importunity: When diſtreſs and danger preſs hard upon us, we become importunate—we ſearch and contrive with intenſeneſs of thought—we ſpare no pains, but in labors are abundant—we cry aloud, and often renew the earneſtneſs of our prayer.

The man who is oppreſſed with want, and ready to periſh, will ſeek relief with importunity. And did you, my brethren, ever know what it is, under deep convictions of ſin, and apprehenſions of the wrath of GOD, to "*hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs?*" Then to you the diſcovery of CHRIST will be welcome—that FRIEND of ſinners, *who*, with infinite compaſſion, "*ſtands and cries, if any* "*man thirſt, let him come to me and drink*—"[d] That wonderous *rock*, which yields its abundant refreſhing ſtreams to weary ſouls, "*in* "*a dry and thirſty land.*"[e] O! how rich the proviſion; how free the grace!

[d] John vii. 37 [e] Pſalm 105. 41.

A man

A man under increaſing diſeaſe, and in the apprehenſion of death, ſeeks with earneſtneſs of deſire for ſome able phyſician. Sirs, have you been ſo deeply ſenſible of the deſeaſe of ſin, and that eternal death it threatens, as to cry with the importunity of a ſoul, who apprehends its deſtruction near? "*Is there* "*no balm in Gilead? Is there no phyſician* "*there?*" "LORD *ſave me, I periſh?*" O! hen, how precious that remedy which the goſpel exhibits! "*As Moſes lifted up the* "*ſerpent in the wilderneſs, even ſo muſt the* "*SON OF MAN be lifted up; that whoſoever* "*believeth in* HIM, *ſhould not periſh, but* "*have everlaſting life.*"[f]

A criminal under ſentence of death, if there be but one beam of hope, will ſeek earneſtly for ſome *mediator*, who can have acceſs to the judge, and has intereſt with him. O! Sirs, there is a precioufneſs in the GOD of our ſalvation in this view, for "HE *ſhall* "*ſtand at the right hand of the poor, to ſave* "*him from thoſe who condemn his ſoul.*"[g] Have you cried, "LORD, *I am oppreſſed,* "*undertake for me?*"

[f] John iii. 14, 15. [g] Pſalm 109, 31.

My

My dear hearers, we ſhall never know the worth of a SAVIOUR, till we ſee our abſolute need of HIM. Nor can we be ſuppoſed to ſee our abſolute need of HIM, while we do not ſeek HIM "*with all our heart.*"

Yes, if you would obtain a ſaving intereſt in this precious REDEEMER, you muſt ſeek HIM, not with the cold indifference of the formal profeſſor, but "*with all your heart.*" HE deſerves and HE expects it.

The *idols* of your natural ſtate muſt be relinquiſhed. *Sin*, all ſin muſt be relinquiſhed with abhorrence. Sins which are confirmed by long practice, and rooted in your conſtitution. Such is the counſel and command of our LORD, "*If thy right eye offend thee, "pluck it out and caſt it from thee: and if "thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and "caſt it from thee; for it is profitable for thee, "that one of thy members ſhould periſh, and "not that thy whole body ſhould be caſt into "hell.*"[h]

The *world* muſt be relinquiſhed; your hearts muſt riſe above its tempting allurements and the terror of its frowns too, if you would win CHRIST. Ah! my brethren, ſhould "*the*

[h] Matt. v, 29, 30

"GOD

"*God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the*
"*Father of Glory, give unto you the ſpirit*
"*of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge*
"*of* HIM—ſhould "*the eyes of your under-*
"*ſtanding be enlightened, that ye may know*
"*what is the hope of* HIS *calling, and what*
"*is the riches of the glory of* HIS *inheritants*
"*in the ſaints*;"[i] You will not think HIS commandments grievous, though he ſay, "*Be not conformed to this world; but be*
"*ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.*"[k]
"*Come out from among them, and be ye*
"*ſeparate.*"[l] No, but your very heart will concur with the precept, and with holy ardor cry, "*God forbid that I ſhould glory,*
"*ſave in the croſs of our Lord Jesus Christ,*
"*by* WHOM *the world is crucified unto me, and*
"*I unto the world.*"[m]

Falſe confidences muſt be relinquiſhed! You muſt rely no longer on your own fancied purity and rectitude—on the merit of your performances—or on your ability to do better, on your birth privileges, or your church privileges: you muſt no more go about to

[i] Eph. i, 17, 18 [k] Rom. 12, 2. [l] 2 Cor. vi. 17.
[m] Gal. vi. 14.

"*eſtabliſh*

"*eſtabliſh your own righteouſneſs*," but humbly and thankfully, and entirely "*ſubmit your-*
"*ſelves to the righteouſneſs of God*:" for
"CHRIST *is the end of the law for righteouſ-*
"*neſs to every one that believeth*;[n] *neither*
"*is there ſalvation in any other!*"

If you would ſeek CHRIST, it muſt be with a heart reſolved to leave no ordinance of heaven neglected—to be diſcouraged by no difficulties or oppoſition—and not account even life itſelf dear unto you, if you may but win that immortal PRIZE! Not only the corruptions of your heart, but earth and hell will oppoſe you. You may meet the rage of the powerful, the ſneer of the ſcornful, and the indignation of ſome who have favoured your worldly intereſt: therefore has JESUS ſaid, "*if any man will come after* ME,
"*let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs and*
"*follow* ME."[o] Again, "*the kingdom of heaven*
"*is likened unto a merchantman ſeeking goodly*
"pearls; *who, when he had found one pearl*
"*of great price, went and ſold all that he*
"*had, and bought it.*"[p] You may be called to make a ſacrifice of the deareſt earthly

[n] Rom. x. iii, iv. [o] Matt. xvi. 24 [p] Matt. xiii. 45, 46.

friendſhips

friendſhips—to act contrary to the counſels, the perſuaſions, the commands of thoſe whom you revere, and whom you love; and you will remember how fully our LORD has declared, "*he that loveth father or mother* "*more than* ME, *is not worthy of* ME; *and he* "*that loveth ſon or daughter more than* ME, "*is not worthy of* ME."[q]

Now my dear hearers, what think you of CHRIST? What think you of following CHRIST? Can you ſay, "*None of theſe* "*things move me?* "*LORD JESUS, let* THY "*grace be ſufficient for me, and* THY *ſtrength* "*be made perfect in my weakneſs;*" "*let* "THY *preſence cheer the period of my conflict* "*on earth, and* THY *glory be my mortal crown* "*in heaven, and I aſk no more.*" "*LORD,* "*I will follow* THEE *whitherſoever thou goeſt:*" then to you belongs the conſolation and encouragement which our text contains; "*thoſe that ſeek* ME *early ſhall find* ME."

Secondly. To ſeek CHRIST *early*, is to ſeek HIM in the *days of childhood and youth*. O! my dear children, my ſpecial wiſh to-day, is to recommend the LORD JESUS to you.

I am

I am ſure you cannot ſerve a better *maſter*, you cannot obtain a better friend; you cannot ſeek an acquaintance with CHRIST, and communion with CHRIST, too ſoon; you cannot too ſoon begin to live unto GOD, to live for your ſouls, and chooſe "*the good* "*part that ſhall not be taken from you.* The ſervice of CHRIST brings unſpeakable, increaſing advantages to *all*; but if any are honored with peculiar endearments, and with the beloved diſciple, lean on JESUS' breaſt, they are the early ſeekers of the GOD of JACOB. O! the ſweet peace, the grateful joy, which *early piety* ſecures, to their advanced and declining years. Believe me, there is not a Chriſtian on earth, there is not a ſaint in heaven, who regrets his early acquaintance with the LORD JESUS! But many a true Chriſtian has grieved to think, that he entered his LORD's vineyard at ſo late an hour: and even to his hoary hairs, has been made "to poſſeſs the *iniquities* of his youth."

My dear children, I rejoice to tell you, our heavenly SHEPHERD, "*carries the lambs* "*in* HIS *arms, and bears them in* HIS *boſom.*" High as HE is in glory, HE looks down with an

an eye of pity, with an heart of love upon little children; HE delights to ſee the deſire of your ſouls towards HIM; to hear you enquiring after HIM, and pouring out your heart before HIM! It is HE that puts it into the heart of your parents, your friends, your miniſters, to take pains to inſtruct you in the knowledge of CHRIST, and to bring you to HIM in the arms of faith and prayer. And HE *feels* peculiar joy when your hearts ſeek HIM, and your infant voices expreſs the deſire of your hearts in pious Hoſannas to *HIM WHO* "*is able to ſave.*" O! hear what HE ſays, "*I love them that love* ME, *and thoſe* "*who ſeek* ME *early, ſhall find* ME."

Theſe gracious words contain

SECONDLY, A declaration and promiſe of great mercy, to encourage thoſe in whom this religious temper is found.

"*I love them that love* ME, *and thoſe that ſeek* ME *early, ſhall find* ME."

"*I love them that love* ME." The import of this declaration is not, that our love to CHRIST precedes HIS love to us, and that it is the cauſe of it! O! no; "*we love* HIM, *becauſe* HE *firſt loved us*:" HE loved us and died for us; HE loved us, and "*called* us *by* HIS *grace*;" or we ſhould never have

ſeen HIS glory, or felt one deſire after HIM. "*Ye have not choſen* ME," (is HIS language to all HIS diſciples) "*but I have choſen you.*"

But the declaration imports, that, love to CHRIST is a diſtinguiſhing and ſure characteriſtic of a Chriſtian; a certain fruit and evidence of the love of CHRIST to the ſoul in whom it is found.

What a heart-reviving declaration is this! "*I love them.*" All the treaſures of ſatisfying bliſs, that earth or heaven can boaſt, are contained in theſe words. "I, WHO am "able to accompliſh every purpoſe of MY "heart, and every wiſh of theirs; *I*, WHO "have all fulneſs of grace, wherewith to "enrich MY people on earth, and a kingdom "of glory to beſtow on them in heaven; "*I* "*love them.*" "*I* have *loved them*, and given "myſelf a *ranſom* for them;" "*I have loved*" "them *with an everlaſting love, and therefore* "*with loving-kindneſs have I drawn* them! "I have given them a heart to know and to "love ME, and brought them into a life-giving, endearing, and everlaſting union with "MYSELF: *I have* loved them, and *I* ſtill "love them; "*I love them*" as MY jewels "and invaluable treaſure; "*I love them*" as "*the travail of* MY *ſoul*, and the fruit of MY "agonies

" agonies and death. " *I love them*" as MY " choſen friends, MY dear children, MY ever- " laſting crown and joy; " *I love them*," and " will keep them from all evil, and ſuffer " them to want no good thing: and will ſave " them with an everlaſting ſalvation."

" *I love them*," and will guide them by the " ſkilfulneſs of MY hand, through the preſent " evil world, in the right way to the city " of habitation. If " *for a ſmall moment I* " ſeem *to forſake* them, *yet with everlaſting* " *kindneſs will I have mercy on* them; *I love* " *them*, and continually bear their names and " their intereſts on MY heart. " *I love them*," " and *will be a* GOD *unto them*, and employ " all MY infinite wiſdom, power, and goodneſs " on their behalf. " *I love them*," and *will put* " MY *Spirit upon them*, and *beautify* them, " *with* MY *ſalvation*. " *I love them*," and will " treat them as MY friends; admit them to " the endearments of holy, heavenly friend- " ſhip: *I will come unto them, and make* MINE " *abode with them*. " *I love them*," and will " *love them unto the end*, and will never reſt " *till* I have brought them to " *be with* ME, " *where I am, to behold* MY *glory*."

It is added, " *Thoſe that ſeek* ME *early, ſhall find* ME."—*That* was an awful word of our

LORD, to many of HIS hearers, "*Ye ſhall ſeek* ME, *and ſhall not find* ME; *and where* I *am, thither ye cannot come.*"[t]

The moſt trifling ſpirit will one day ſee the concerns of his ſoul in an important light. The deſpiſer of CHRIST will one day be convinced, that HIS favour is worth purchaſing, though with a thouſand lives. Liſten then, O, thoughtleſs mortals, to HIS own very ſerious counſel; "*Strive to enter in at the ſtraight gate; for many, I ſay unto you, ſhall ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able.*"[u]

But "*the expectation of the poor ſhall not periſh for ever:*" their "*ſoul ſhall live that ſeek* GOD:" "*ye ſhall ſeek for* ME *and find* ME, *when ye ſhall ſearch for* ME *with all your heart.*"

And is CHRIST precious to any of you my dear hearers; and do your hearts ſeek HIM? O! let me beſeech you, think no pains too great in ſeeking for ſuch a TREASURE; think no ſacrifice too great, to ſecure the affection of ſuch a FRIEND; think no croſs too heavy to bear after ſuch a LEADER.

I rejoice that I have *encouragement* to offer as well as *counſel.* Be of good cheer, ye ſeek HIM, WHO firſt and in wonderous ways

[t] John vii. 34 [u] Luke xiii. 24.

ſought

ſought you, and ſtill ſeeketh you; for; "*The* SON OF MAN *is come to ſeek and to ſave that which was loſt:*" and your ſeeking HIM, is but the effect and fruit of HIS purpoſe and grace concerning you.

But oh! the value of that pearl you ſeek! The preciouſneſs and glory of JESUS exceeds the language of mortals; it "*paſſeth knowledge.*"

Behold HIM, "*a teacher come from* GOD—" come to ſatisfy every enquiry of a trembling conſcience, and proclaim the love of GOD to a ſinful world—to *take the book* of the FATHER'S decree—to *looſe the ſeals*—to unfold to wondering angels and men, the grand contrivance of ſalvation; the amazing "*depth of the riches both of the wiſdom and knowledge of* GOD:" and there, as in a mirror, exhibit *juſtice* and *grace* in their brighteſt glories, and in the ſweeteſt harmony.

The trembling *conſcience* knows HIS voice; many a ſelf-convinced ſinner has bidden HIM welcome, as "*an interpreter one amongſt a thouſand,*" has ſat at HIS feet, and hung on HIS lips, and with wonder and joy exclaimed, "*Never man ſpake like* THIS MAN."

In this view HE is the MORNING STAR; the pledge of a cloudleſs, joyful, eternal day; "Nay, *unto you that fear* ME, *ſhall the* SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS *ariſe with healing in* HIS *wings!*"[t] The thick darkneſs of affliction, and even "*the bitterneſs of death is paſt*" when HE appears. Sins and tranſgreſſions which had overwhelmed the ſoul in diſtreſs, are *blotted out* by the influence of HIS truth and grace, as the threatning cloud vaniſhes before the prevailing *ſun!* And oh, what beauties, what unthought of beauties, HIS marvellous *light* diſcloſes.

With what cheerfulneſs at HIS *riſing* the renewed ſinner, awakened from the ſleep of ſin, and chooſing the way of GOD's ſtatutes, "*goes forth unto his work and his labour until the evening*;" "*Yea, they ſhall ſing in the ways of the* LORD, *for great is the glory of the* LORD."

What need I ſay more? Is the wrath of GOD revealed from Heaven againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men? "*A* MAN *ſhall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempeſt, as rivers of*

[t] Mal. iv. 2.

water

water in a dry place, as the ſhadow of a great rock in a weary land?"[u] is the deſtroying angel going round, as the executioner of GOD's wrathful ſentence againſt HIS apoſtate creatures? "*CHRIST our paſſover is ſacrificed for us.*" O ſirs, if your hearts be ſprinkled with HIS atoning blood, "*there ſhall no evil befal you, neither ſhall any plague come near your dwelling.*" The deſtroying angel has no commiſſion againſt you! No; but "*HE ſhall give HIS angels charge concerning you.*" Your "*JESUS* has *redeemed* you *from the curſe of the law;*" "*HE holds the keys of the inviſible world, and of death;*" and ſays, "*whoſoever liveth and believeth in ME ſhall never die.*"[v]

That language then of joy and triumph belongeth to one who hath found CHRIST, "*Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of "GOD's elect? It is GOD that juſtifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is CHRIST that died: yea, rather that is riſen again, WHO is even at the right hand of GOD, WHO alſo maketh interceſſion for us.*"[w]

Precious foundation, on which to build for eternity! It is a *rock* which rains and ſtorms, and floods cannot move.

[u] Iſaiah xxxii. 2. [v] John xi. 26. [w] Rom. viii. 32, 33, 34.

Do

Do the clouds gather, and have we reaſon to apprehend times of national diſtreſs? Behold here is an *ark!* and "*behold now is the* "*day of ſalvation!*" *It* is the contrivance of heaven,—*it* has been tried; and the experience of a cloud of witneſſes invites your entrance. O! get *into* this *ark*—hanging to the outſide by a ſpecious profeſſion will not ſave you. *Get into* this *ark*—embark your all here—be it your ſolicitude to "*win* CHRIST *and be found in* HIM." Then, "*you ſhall* "*dwell on high, the place of your defence* "*ſhall be a munition of rocks; bread ſhall be* "*given you, and your water ſhall be ſure.*"

Do you then ſeek JESUS who was crucified? You ſeek one WHO is a PRINCE and a SAVIOUR: one who is "*PRINCE of the kings of the earth.*" HIS power is invincible; HIS kingdom ſhall never be removed. *A multitude that no man can number*, of HIS ſubjects, fall at HIS feet, and with loud tranſports of joy ſing, "*worthy is the* LAMB *that was ſlain, for* HE *hath redeemed us.*" You ſeek one WHO is a FRIEND indeed! a FRIEND who ſhed HIS precious blood for HIS very enemies, at once to ranſom and to win them! This was love and grace beyond degree! The warmeſt affection of the moſt endeared earthly friend, or the tendereſt

tendereſt parent, is cold and languid, when compared with the love of that heart which bled at Calvary. This is a FRIEND WHOSE love never changes; a FRIEND WHOSE power is equal to HIS grace; a FRIEND WHOSE favor ſhall be your protection and your joy, in that awful day, when the great men, the mighty heroes of the world ſhall be overwhelmed with confuſion and horror, and cry in vain for the very extinction of their being! A FRIEND who "*is able to do for you* "*exceeding abundantly beyond all you can aſk* "*or think!*"

O precious CHRIST! what treaſures of love and ſweetneſs have HIS people found in HIM, when the comforts of this world were gone; when diſtreſs and trouble came upon them! It was HIS *grace* that enabled them to poſſeſs their ſouls in patience, under the ſevereſt oppreſſions and perſecutions, and to "*glory in tribulations alſo.*" It was HE WHO taught them to "*take joyfully the ſpoil-*"*ing of their goods,*" kindly aſſuring them, that they "*had in heaven a better and en-*"*during ſubſtance.*" It was HIS preſence that brightened the gloomy dungeon, and gave them ſongs in the darkeſt night of their diſtreſs. It was the joy of HIS ſalvation,

which

which enabled them to hold fast their confidence, amidst devouring flames and cruel tortures; and made them more than conquerors!

But there are treasures of love and sweetness in JESUS, which the most honoured saint in this world cannot *fully* explore. We here "*see through a glass darkly.*"—Yet the distant view which faith takes of the REDEEMER's glory fills the soul with joy unspeakable: but

"HIS beauties we shall never trace
"Till we behold HIM face to face."

O then seek JESUS—seek a saving interest in him—seek a vital union with HIM—abide in this *vine*—drink of this *rock*—follow this *leader*; HE will prove your light in darkness, your strength in weakness, your life in death, your everlasting joy when the days and the occasions of your mourning shall be for ever ended!

REFLEXIONS.

I. Shall we not congratulate the *Christian*, and call him blessed, who has found CHRIST, and is beloved of HIM? Yes, he has a precious ground of "*everlasting consolation.*" He has reason to "*rejoice in the LORD alway,*" and

and "*in ev'ry thing to give thanks.*" Pains and ſufferings, loſſes and croſſes may attend him, but HE WHO is "GOD OVER ALL," has "*given commandment to ſave him.*" There is an everlaſting purpoſe of the grace of GOD towards him, which is big with treaſured felicity, and theſe are means choſen by infinite wiſdom, to bring that purpoſe into effect: theſe are clouds which, after a frowning appearance, drop with bleſſings on his ſoul.

There is a *fullneſs* and *ſufficiency* in his poſſeſſions and enjoyments —— "*he enters into reſt*;" while they "*who mind earthly things*," "*ſpend* their *money for that which is not bread, and* their *labour for that which ſatisfieth not.*" While *they* are diſquieted with continual diſappointments, and find the glory of the world paſſing away, JESUS introduces HIS people to living ſprings of ſatisfying bliſs: HE reveals boundleſs ſources of felicity, and ſays, "*I will cauſe them that love* ME *to inherit ſubſtance, and I will fill their treaſures.*"

Happy man! thy riches are unſearchable; thy "*treaſure is in heaven, where moth cannot corrupt, nor thieves break through and ſteal:*" "*Thy ſun ſhall no more go down, neither*

ſhall

ſhall thy moon withdraw itſelf, for the LORD *ſhall be unto thee an everlaſting light, and thy* GOD *thy glory.*"

Bleſſed JESUS, what has that man to fear—what felicity and glory has he not to expect, whom THY blood has ranſomed—whom THY treaſures enrich—and THINE everlaſting arms ſecure! Truly is it ſaid, "*in* THY *favor is life, and* THY *loving-kindneſs is better than life.*" In the darkeſt night let me but hear THY voice, ſaying "*fear not, for I have redeemed thee!*" and I ſhall be ſecure from the fear of evil; I ſhall ſweetly ſing, "*I know* WHOM *I have believed, and that* HE *is able to keep what I committed unto* HIM, *until that day.*"

II. How much to be lamented is that cold indifference which multitudes diſcover towards the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Ah! how few ſeek HIM, as if they felt their need of HIM! How few are heard to glory in the *croſs* of CHRIST! and with believing joy to ſay, "*Surely in the* LORD *have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength.*" Many bear HIS name, and profeſs to follow HIM; but how few appear to *ſerve* HIM as if they felt the conſtraints of HIS dying love! How many inſtead of being dead to the world by the *croſs* of CHRIST, treat the "*unſpeakable gift*"

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of the FATHER's love with contempt, while the vanities of this world occupy their *very hearts*.

Ah, ſinner! is it indeed becauſe there is "*no form or comelineſs in* HIM *for which* "*you ſhould deſire* HIM?" Can you foreſee no period wherein an intereſt in the favor and mediation of CHRIST will appear deſirable? What though now your mountain ſeems to ſtand ſtrong, and you are exempt from thoſe diſtreſsful events which embitter the lives of many, and call for ſupports and conſolations which the world cannot give—you may find it a very ſerious thing to *die*. When you are conſtrained to look into eternity, vaſt and awful eternity, your confidence may fail you; conſcience may "*write bitter things againſt you*;" you may *tremble* to ſee what a rebel againſt GOD you have been. Then what will you do without CHRIST? Ah! where will *you* look for conſolation in that awful ſeaſon, who have neglected the great ſalvation—who have *rejected* a SAVIOUR—undervalued HIS MEDIATION and reſiſted HIS SPIRIT?

Would you direct a dying look heavenward? Ah! how muſt it pierce your very heart, to hear HIM WHO "*hath the key of David*,

David, WHO openeth and no man ſhutteth, and ſhutteth, and no man openeth," ſay, "*I know you not!*"

Sirs, the time will come, when "*the overflowing ſcourge ſhall ſweep away* every *refuge of lies*;" and then, in full conviction will appear the preciouſneſs of that "*foundation which* GOD *hath laid in Zion.* The time will come when the world ſhall paſs away, and its place be no more found; and then they who now make light of the goſpel call, will be compelled to acknowledge, that he "*hath choſen the part,*" to whom JESUS ſhall ſay, "*come* thou *bleſſed of my* FATHER, *inherit the kingdom prepared for* thee *from before the foundation of the world.*"

O! let me charge you, be ſober minded, think ſeriouſly of the awful *juſtice*, the tremendous *majeſty* of that GOD, with WHOM you have to do; and then you will not think lightly of an intereſt in the favour of that FRIEND OF SINNERS, WHO ſtands with pardons in HIS hands, "*and WHO is able to ſave them UNTO the uttermoſt that come unto* GOD *by* HIM."

Let us then hear the concluſion of the matter, as it is given us in the cloſe of the chapter, by the ſame heavenly *FRIEND*, and *COUNSELLOR*, who ſpeaks in our text, "*Bleſſed*

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is the man that heareth ME, *watching daily at* MY *gates, waiting at the posts of* MY *doors; for whoso findeth* ME, *findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord: but he that sinneth against* ME, *wrongeth his own soul. All they that hate* ME, *love death!"*

FINIS.

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